DIARY NOTES

DD/S

5 August 1965

1. I met with Colonel White and John Warner about Agency overtime pay practices. It had been suggested that we might use the current pay bill, which was approved by the House Post Office and Civil Service Committee today, as a vehicle to obtain an exemption for CIA from the basic provisions for the payment of overtime which were established in the Pay Act of 1945. After some discussion we felt that the timing of such a proposal was politically unfeasible, and we agreed not to undertake this action at this time. We felt that it would be more appropriate to include such a provision in a specific piece of CIA legislation since it would more logically relate to the operation of the Agency. Accordingly, no action will be taken.

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2. Recently the Office of Security brought to my attention an accident in which an individual had received an electrical burn from the high voltage in the light switches in the Headquarters building. An investigation revealed that the plastic switch has two metal screws on the side to which the power wires are attached. The clearance between these metal screws and the side of the switch box is about 1/32 of an inch. Each switch carries 277 volts as opposed to the 110-120 volts normally carried in electric light circuits. The clearance tolerance is so small that, should the switch become loose, it can touch the side of the metal switch box. This might create an arc or dust might induce an arc which can burn out the switch box or transmit the 277 volts through the face of the switch. I asked [redacted] to get in touch with the GSA electrical engineers immediately and to come up with an immediate solution--if necessary, a short-range and a long-range solution--so that this condition can be corrected. We anticipate the possibility of more problems as the building grows older. After meeting with the GSA electrical engineers, they propose a substitute switch which has its wire connections at the bottom of the switch, thus removing the danger of possible contact with the side of the metal box. I met with [redacted] and Howard Osborn today to discuss this problem. We agreed that a program should be put into effect immediately to change all the light switches in the Headquarters building. The cost of such a program is $100,000, but we expect that GSA will pick up the tab since this falls in their area of responsibility. I insisted that these switches be changed immediately and that GSA should pay. However, if there is any serious argument about who will pay, we might have to bear the cost. As a result of this discovery, the GSA electrical engineers are now reviewing similar installations in other Government

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buildings, two of which have recently been completed. I have a basic question about the circumstances under which such a situation could develop wherein a light switch with an outside tolerance of 277 volts is put on a circuit with 277 volts. Further, knowing the possibility of conduction of this voltage into the metal box and the metal face plate, how could anyone permit a metal light switch box to have only 1/32 of an inch clearance between the metal power screws and the side of the box. I propose to ask for an explanation of this situation and whether there are any similar situations existent in this building.

RLB:jrf